

AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES

June 6th, 2003

Members Present: Jean Haggerty, Liz Massey, Janice Denton, Sara Wolff, Doris Mundo, Elsie Fetterman, Isaac BenEzra, Henry Peirce

Staff Present: John Clobridge, Nancy Pagano

Other: Doris Holden (Senior Trust Treasurer)

Minutes of May 8th: Will be approved at July meeting

Senior Trust Treasurer's Report:

Doris transferred \$1000 from Edward Jones Account to cover the Nursing Center expenditures and emergency loan. The interest is presently at a rate of .43%. Donations in response to the solicitation have slowed down.

Doris Mundo asked if the money the Town sends us for the Nursing Center exceeds or equals donations. The answer from John is that donations equal expenses.

John and Maureen put together a notebook about the Trust with notes and disbursements so COA members can know how money has been spent through the years. John handed out a sheet about Trust disbursements. Sara asked that John break down the expenditures by years as otherwise the list is difficult to understand. Sara asked if there was a policy on how these decisions are made. Doris Mundo suggested a spreadsheet format to identify emerging trends. Doris said she does not want the Senior Trust to be asked for everything.

Nancy said that in March of this year, prior to the solicitation, a meeting was held of staff to give input to the COA regarding use of Senior Trust monies. The results of that meeting might be a good starting off place for future discussions on developing a Trust philosophy. (See attached summary of that meeting.)

Doris Mundo reminded COA members that non-profits are "not obligated" to spend donated monies as requested by donors. She also added that if the COA wants people to donate, it needs to be sensitive to the donors requests.

John said that in the COA annual solicitation drive, people were asked how they want their donations to be spent--this is different than memorials. He said that we have no one policy on this. Doris puts together an annual budget, staff and COA members make specific requests, and there are emergency funds needed for individuals at times. A set of priorities is needed.

Doris Mundo suggested having an annual Trust meeting to set priorities so a better job can be done. Doris and Elsie can generate material for this meeting.

Nancy presented a proposal by artist Lily Shabunin to paint a mural or set of murals for the large activity room over the summer at a cost of \$700. Lily has just graduated from UMass and has the time and energy now to do the work and the price quoted is half of what she normally gets. She painted a mural at Rao's and her work is bright and cheerful. The request was denied at this time. Isaac would have liked a final report from the now inactive decorating committee and he suggests more community involvement. Sara likes the idea of community projects and will work with Nancy on this.

Director's Report

The message of John's report is that problem solving on issues needs to be done through coalitions.

PVTA Fare Increase Discussion

Isaac suggested the COA should extend an invitation to PVTA and Arthur Swift of the Public Transportation Committee to speak at the next COA meeting. Isaac says that the COA should encourage people to write letters about how proposed increases will impact them. Doris Mundo said that the COA should take a position on the current transportation fare proposal. She said Richard Mundo meets with the Mayor of Agawam with his concerns. Doris said we should try to encourage Arthur Swift (through Barry) to vote yes on the \$1 rate.

Jean reported that folks are willing to pay to go to Springfield to the final PVTA meeting 6/11 when the fare decision will be discussed. Doris advises contact PVTA reps about their votes--she asked Arthur Swift why he voted the way he did. He said he was trying to make sense of \$1 vs. \$2 implication. John said it would be good if COA members voted to support a \$1 fare each way. Isaac suggested making their decision known at the Selectboard Meeting, with WMACA representatives and with Dave Stevens of MCOA.

VOTED The COA unanimously supports \$1 fare each way and to take whatever steps necessary to get community support. Doris Mundo will work on a press release.

Committees

- **HVES**

Liz attended her first meeting. HVES is developing its web site so it will list area services and providers. The section will be called "Caring Community". It will encourage volunteerism. COAs will provide "mapping". Elsie handed out a list of communities and the HVES funded services in those communities. Our COA can apply for additional grants. Isaac advises the COA to work with staff to look for new financial resources.

- **TRANSPORTATION**

Jean reported that the ADA application is no longer 11 pages, now it is only 4 pages. It must have a doctor's signature. Some of the questions address confidential and complex issues. The committee is concerned that lay people may not always be appropriate to evaluate ADA qualification.

- **WELLNESS**

Sara said the Wellness Committee has broadened its focus to look at how people are affected by budget cuts. Jean Haggerty attended as President of the Ann Whalen Tenant's Association. This was useful to look at what the survival issues are that the COA could be helpful with. The manager of the Clark House, Kathy, will attend the next meeting.

Doris Mundo commented that depression and isolation are a big concern with elders as they try to cope with all the cuts that are affecting them. These include transportation fees, the loss of Mass Health Basic, cuts to Prescription Advantage, etc. Isaac said rallies and meetings help with dealing with alienation and give hope. He suggests that the Amherst COA join the Mass Senior Action Council as an affiliate. He would like a discussion of this at July's meeting.

- **NOMINATING**

Elsie, Jean and Janice met. There are four applicants. Elsie sent copies of their applications to COA members. The committee asked Barry to consider extending Isaac's term. Barbara Melrose resigned. Doris Mundo questioned whether one applicant has a conflict of interest because of his relationship to an employee. John assured the COA that there is no problem if the applicant recuses himself on issues related to that employee's job.

Other

- Isaac stated that this would be his last meeting as a COA member. He said he is grateful for the COA support, and he thanks members for that. His involvement will continue. Jean expressed gratitude to Isaac for all his good work on behalf of seniors.
- Jean said that starting in July, there are plans being formulated for informal meetings between COA members and staff to develop a closer working relationship. Isaac said, "he hopes that John will take the initiative to follow up on this."

The next meeting of the COA will be on July 10th at 9 AM.

Respectfully submitted, Jean Haggerty and Nancy Pagano